

Meeting Notes



Stantec

Technical Meeting #3

East Hanover Avenue Corridor Transportation Study

Date/Time: May 3, 2012 2:00 PM
Place: Morris County Public Library
Attendees: See Attachment
Distribution: Attendees, File

I. Meeting Purpose

The purpose of Technical Meeting #3 was to discuss the comments on the Draft East Hanover Avenue Corridor Study provided by Morris County, Hanover Township, Morris Township, and Morris Plains Borough, and to discuss potential alternatives to move forward. Stantec also presented two additional options for the implementation of Alternative 3 at the intersection of Speedwell Avenue and East Hanover Avenue. The two additional options provided concepts that would avoid the complete acquisition of all three gas stations at the intersection.

The following is a summary of the items discussed during the project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting with representatives from Morris County, Hanover Township, Morris Township, Morris Plains Borough, NJ TRANSIT, TransOptions, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), and NJDOT's consultant, Stantec. An attendance sign-in sheet is attached to this document.

II. Meeting Content

Adam Catherine from Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. (Stantec) began the meeting by addressing comments at each study intersection along the corridor.

Speedwell Avenue and East Hanover Avenue

- The majority of report reviewers recognized Alternative 3 as the best alternative to increase capacity at the intersection of Speedwell and East Hanover Avenues. However, there were concerns regarding the secondary impacts of Alternative 3, such as ROW and pedestrian safety.

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- Two additional options for Alternative 3, Alternative 3A and Alternative 3B, were presented to show how impacts to the adjacent properties could be minimized.
- Alternative 3A shifts the intersection 10 feet to the south and slightly east to minimize the impacts to the gas stations on the northeast and northwest corners of the intersection. Full acquisition of the gas station on the southeast corner would still be required. In addition, minor ROW acquisition would be required from properties on the south side of East Hanover Ave due to the shift in intersection location.
- Alternative 3B shifts the intersection 5 feet to the north and slightly west to minimize impacts to the gas station on the SE corner of the intersection. However, the gas stations in the northeast and northwest corners of the intersection would be impacted.
- Estimated ROW costs are necessary compare the various options for the Speedwell Avenue intersection. The ROW cost analysis and comparison will be incorporated into the revised report.
- The expansion of the intersection would impact pedestrian and bicycle traffic. In particular, the additional lanes proposed for Speedwell Avenue would increase crossing time for pedestrians along the north and south approaches. However, pedestrian crossing times across East Hanover Avenue would likely remain the same because the geometry of the east and west approaches would remain generally the same. The increase in pedestrian crossing time was incorporated into the intersection capacity analysis.
- A discussion of qualitative issues, such as pedestrian, bicycle, and property impacts, will be incorporated into the revised report.
- A right turn lane from West Hanover Avenue to southbound Speedwell Avenue was not incorporated into any alternative because it would require additional ROW. In addition, the right-turn volumes were relatively low and would likely not justify the addition of a right turn lane.
- Representatives from Morris Township requested an update on the expansion of the study to evaluate additional through lanes along West Hanover Avenue in order to reduce queuing at the Stiles Avenue intersection and cut-through traffic along adjacent residential streets. Representatives from the County stated that it could be considered in a second phase to the current study, but that it is not included within the existing scope of the study. Reducing cut-through traffic would most likely

require a more-extensive regional study that includes an origin and destination analysis.

Mr. Catherine also stated that while expanding the study area would allow for the evaluation of an additional alternative at the Speedwell Avenue intersection, an additional lane would likely not have a significant benefit to eastbound traffic because it would still be constrained by the Speedwell Avenue intersection signal. Morris Township requested that Stantec provide a cost estimate for the additional work that would be required to expand the study area.

- Helene Rubin suggested that a reversible lane could be considered for West Hanover Avenue. However, other meeting attendees expressed apprehension regarding the application of this measure on a residential street.

Multi-Use Path

- The majority of report comments recommended that the multi-use path be eliminated because of short-term and long-term costs.
- While the multi-use path is not required, it was analyzed in an effort to incorporate “Complete Streets” concepts, which were required by the County and NJDOT in the original scope of the study.
- It is difficult to estimate future path usage; however, given the other existing and proposed paths in the area, it would likely generate recreational trips by connecting residences and businesses to the regional path network.
- A multi-use path could serve as an amenity that could be marketed to current and future businesses along the corridor. Multi-use paths in other areas are often viewed as a significant recreational amenity that helps boost desirability and property values of a particular area.
- The multi-use path would also promote multi-modal activity along the corridor and, unlike a standard sidewalk, would provide a safe area for bicycles to traverse the corridor.
- The multi-use path was considered as an alternative to bike lanes, which would require widening the entire corridor.
- Christine Marion noted that the County revised its comment on the multi-use path to reflect a desire to work with developers to obtain easements for the multi-use path.

Mid-Block Crossings

- Unsignalized mid-block crosswalks should be removed from the report. Additional sidewalks could be used to mitigate the need for mid-block crossings.

Martin Luther King Ave/Horse Hill Road and East Hanover Avenue

- The developer of the proposed ShopRite center will be paying for the improvements along East Hanover Avenue, including dedicated left-turn lanes. Other improvements shown on the plan, such as the sidewalk extensions, are not included.
- Stantec should highlight improvements proposed by the developer in a different color in order to better identify improvements that are in addition to those proposed by developers.

Monroe Street and East Hanover Avenue

- The proposed unsignalized crosswalk should be removed from the plans.
- A developer is currently proposing a big box retail store with additional stand-alone retail pads on the property on the northwest corner of Ridgedale Avenue and East Hanover Avenue. The proposed site plan shows a signalized driveway close to the existing County garage driveway. A dedicated left-turn lane would be provided, and the driveway would be shared between the site and the County garage.
- It is recommended that a crosswalk be provided across East Hanover Avenue at the proposed signal, and a sidewalk be provided along the south side of East Hanover Avenue to connect the crosswalk with the existing sidewalk on Monroe Street.
- A continuous two-way left-turn (TWLT) lane is recommended for the area between Ridgedale Avenue and Monroe Street to facilitate access to the businesses on the south side of East Hanover Avenue.
- Some concern was expressed that the proposed left-turn lane would encourage traffic to cut through Monroe Street. Stantec suggested that the TWLT could end just east of Monroe Street to address this concern.

Ridgedale Avenue and East Hanover Avenue

- The majority of reviewers felt that Alternative 2 would be adequate for this intersection.

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- The developer would be responsible for providing the eastbound left-turn lane. However, it is unclear at this time if they would be making modifications to the westbound approach if additional ROW is required to provide the westbound left-turn lane.
- It was suggested that Stantec examine the possibility of eliminating the auxiliary lane along the westbound approach. If the auxiliary lane was eliminated, the existing roadway ROW could accommodate the westbound left-turn lane.

Whippany Road and East Hanover Avenue

- Based on the findings in the report, the signal timing improvements would result in significant queue reductions along eastbound East Hanover Avenue during the AM peak hour. Therefore, the recommended ramp widening shown in Alternative 3 should not be pursued at this time, but could be considered in the future, as needed.
- Ms. Rubin noted that the DOT would be willing to turn the signal over to County, and that the County could make the signal timing improvements. Otherwise, the signal timing improvement project would have to be placed in the project queue.

Miscellaneous Items

- Stantec was asked whether or not the existing traffic volumes accounted for the fact that there are many vacancies at properties on The American Road. Mr. Catherine stated that the vacancies are accounted for in the growth rate used to project to the design year. In addition, trips were generated for specific sites that were projected to be constructed along The American Road.
- The County will coordinate a public information session this summer, after the revised report is issued.
- The County parks department is developing way-finding signage. Stantec should incorporate way-finding recommendations into the report.
- Stantec will attend the July meeting of the Morris County Transportation Board to present the study.

III. Action Items

- Stantec to issue a final draft report in early June that incorporates the ROW cost analysis, County and Municipal comments, and adjustments to

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the analysis to reflect the recent site plan for the Ridgedale Avenue property.

- Stantec to coordinate with the County to schedule the public information session after the release of the revised report.
- Stantec to revise concept plans to provide delineation between improvements proposed by the developers and those proposed by the study.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer within one week.

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